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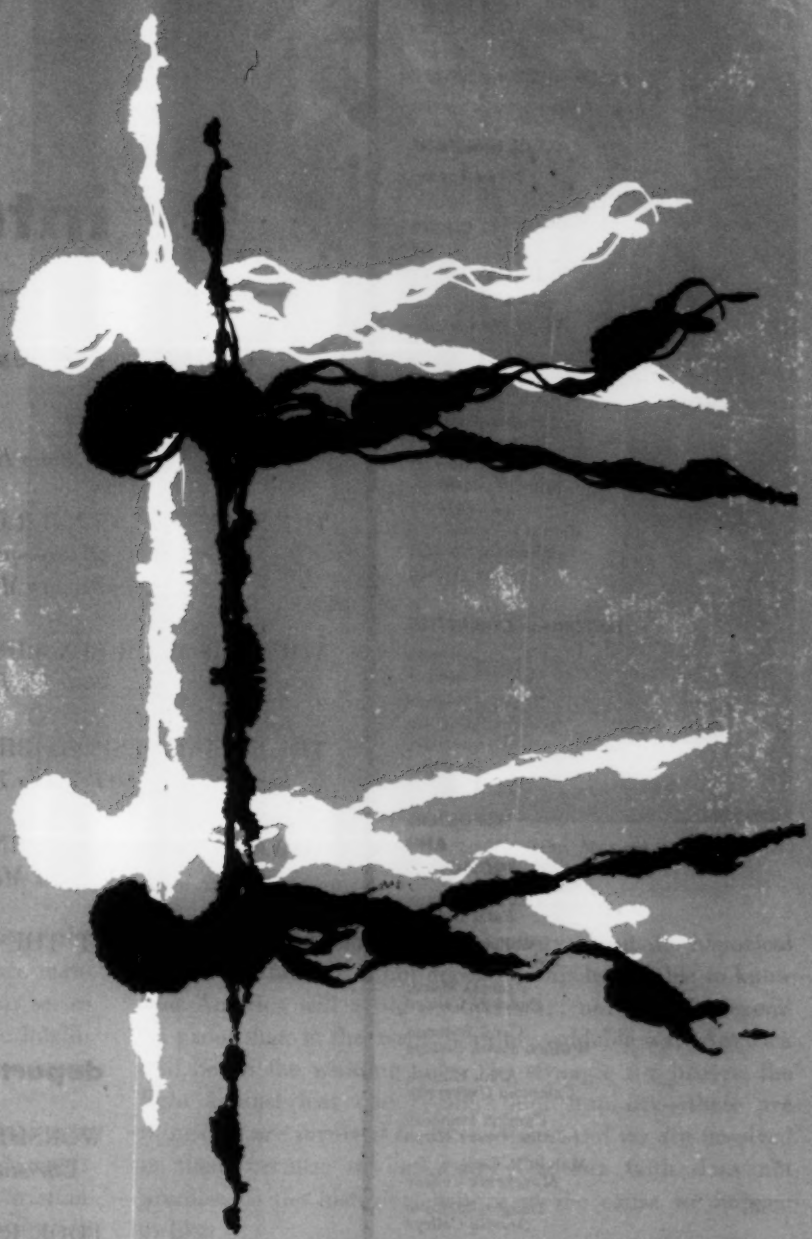

do we need hope?

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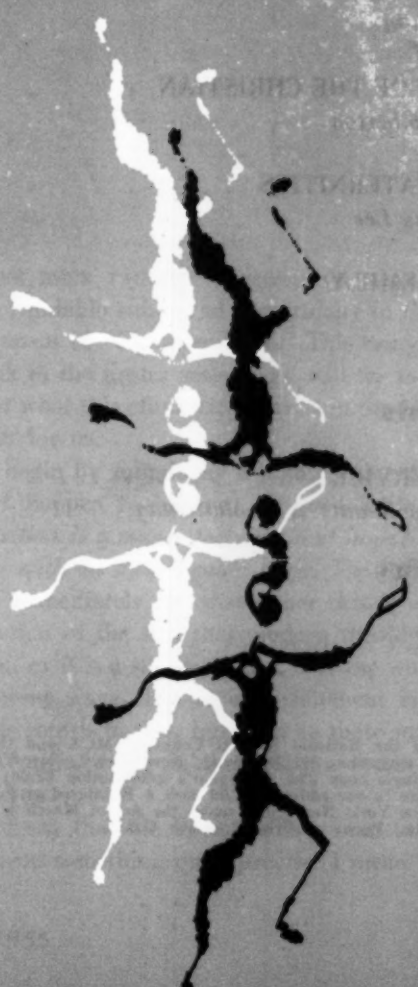

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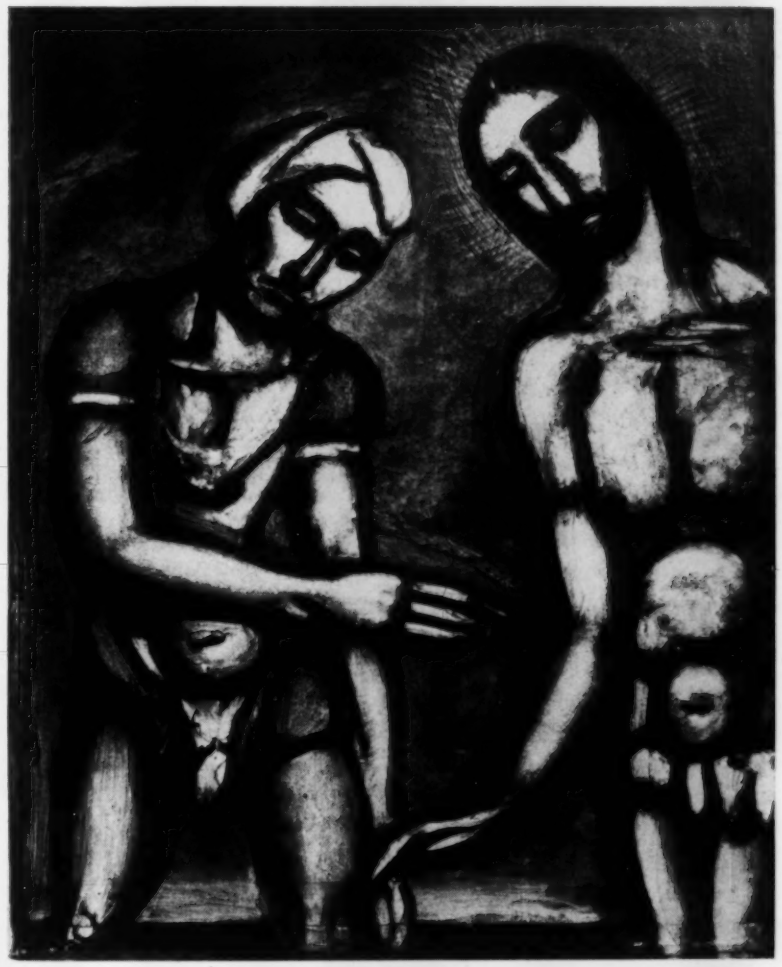
a Christian theology in miniature: fifth article in the series

do we need hope?



Georges Rouault: "Lord it is thou, I know thee." (Courtesy, Museum of Modern Art)

WE HAVE BEEN TAUGHT in recent years to think of the rather formidable subject of eschatology in the more manageable terms of "Christian hope." This essay in our series will speak of the Easter season and will try to make intelligible just what this climactic moment in the Christian story can mean for us.

I will begin by submitting a highly vulnerable statement (which I happen to believe) to your critical judgment: *The Christian is a man utterly without hope; the Christian is a man with an unshakeable hope.* The logicians among you will immediately say that either this is an intolerable contradiction of the sort that modern theologians seem to delight in, or it is a statement that uses the word "hope" in two different ways. The second statement is true, and I shall later return to this, but even so there may be an element of contradiction in the position I will try to commend to you.

When I say that the Christian is a man utterly without hope I mean something quite precise. I mean that the man in Christ never requires any certainty about the historical future. His faith does not depend on his being able to know that America will avoid another war; nor does it depend on proof that, in the event of an unavoidable war, America will be on the winning side. The struggle for justice, the fight against fear and tyranny and stupidity—these are things we are involved in all the time. And we are involved in them because of our faith. But our faith does not promise us the historical victory of the cause we happen to like.

If the Christian is independent of calculations about the cultural and historical future, if in our particular political, economic, military activity we have no Christian guarantee that our side will win—this Christian "hopelessness" is also true of our individual lives. Our faith does not depend on our hopes for ourselves turning out just as we would like. We hear a good bit today about success and conformity as false goals by which we seek to guarantee a certain

continued on next page

amount of security and freedom from anxiety. We have to learn to say in the face of all this pressure a rather hard thing: *The Christian cannot make his central personal aim in life security, success, freedom from tension and anxiety.* If these things are your central hopes for the future, you simply cannot understand the Christian faith. You certainly cannot understand Christ. If these things are of central importance for you, you had better try looking for another god, for the Christian God will scarcely satisfy you. In many quarters today the Christian God is portrayed as a sinecure for our uncertain tomorrows. We must have the boldness to say that the Christian God thus proclaimed is being twisted out of all recognizable shape. He does not give us security by promising us a personal life free from failure, tension and doubt.

What does "Christian hope" mean?

You have already noticed how I have played on the ambiguity of the word hope. What we hope for in the ordinary sense is some future event that is more or less desirable, and that has some fair chance of coming to pass. In this sense, obviously, we hope for all sorts of things: good grades, a happy marriage, a decent job, and all the rest. But when we talk about *the Christian hope* we are using the word in quite a different way. What I "hope" for as a Christian is that single thing which for me, in the loneliness of my faith, is unshakably and unmistakably certain. And this "Christian thing" is not a future historical event of any kind. The law of tragedy and death hangs over every present and future historical event, and thus I cannot base a Christian hope on any cultural or individual possibility in the future. My "Christian hope" is, therefore, Christ.

But what can this mean? Was Christ not the center of a cluster of historical events? If so, did not the law of tragedy hang over these events, just as it hangs over my own present and future? I think we can understand Easter and this whole problem if we say that Christ can be our hope precisely because the event of which he was the center was the only historical event in which the law of inevitable tragedy did not apply. Good Friday was a time of great despair; the disciples, perhaps, had based their "hope" on what was a too this-worldly view of Jesus' victory and success. The despair of Good Friday is the parable of the despair of every man who confuses human hope and God's hope, so that when the human hope is apparently doomed God is apparently mocked as well. The resurrection of Christ is the divine act that makes it possible for us to have any hope at all; in Christ we see the only historical event in which the tragedy is utterly destroyed. He who was dead is now alive.

A Christian faith without the resurrection of Christ is a very poor thing. It is a despairing faith. And it may well be that one of the reasons the categories of anxiety and despair are perhaps too congenial to Christian thinkers today is because we have not really come to terms with the meaning of the resurrection.

No human experience is without God's presence

The resurrection of Christ is not a guarantee that you and I will inherit eternal life, not a proof of our survival of death. It is an act of God, a mark of Christ's victory, an assurance that no human experience in life or in death is without God's presence and love.

But how are we supposed to think of the resurrection? Did it really happen? We have only a few certainties to go on: we have the despair of Good Friday, when the messianic ministry of Jesus Christ seemed to the disciples to be a failure. Then a few weeks later we have records of the young Christian church, preaching and teaching and healing with confidence and joy and saying that while Christ had been put to death by sinful men and the providence of God, God had raised him from the dead. In between these two events there is little to help us relieve the mystery. There are empty tomb stories at the end of Luke and Matthew, but they contradict one another; both cannot be true so we are inclined to wonder if either can be true. We have difficult and, for some, unbelievable tales about walking through doors, about the risen Christ eating and speaking with the disciples. I will venture to say that there are two different ways of speaking of the problem. Neither is adequate, both have difficulties, both are serious, humble and reverent attempts to combine our faith in Christ with the evidence for his resurrection as we see it:

(1) Because we dare not set limits to the power of God, we may say that on that first Easter morning God actually restored the dead Christ to life by a miraculous act of creative power. And Christ then actually, corporeally, appeared to certain individuals; spoke, ate, interpreted himself and his meaning. To believe this is not a sheer act of forcing oneself to believe the incredible. The evidence suggests this as a real possibility. But we do not use evidence alone here. Our faith helps us interpret the evidence. We would not believe this of any other man, but our faith in what God was doing through Christ, plus the evidence (both the gospel stories and the miraculous movement from the despair of Good Friday to the joy and power of Pentecost), permits us to ascribe this mighty act to God. In this view we do not claim to be able to spell out how God did this thing; we do not claim to know the exact difference between the crucified body and the risen body. But the resurrection is not a vision, not an hallucination, not a means of describing an inner conviction of the presence of Christ. It is an actual historic event.

(2) But for others, just as honest with the evidence, just as strong in their faith, this conclusion does not come. This second view recognizes that we dare not set limits to the power of God but it is afraid to use that statement as an excuse to believe anything. The evidence doesn't compel this conclusion. Maybe, they say, we are dominated by our scientific presuppositions, by an initial skepticism

Weaver Hawkins: "Last Supper"

Courtesy of Australian Council for World Council of Churches

that miraculous restorations of dead bodies simply do not happen. But, we feel that the meaning of the resurrection of Christ can be preserved if we claim to know a little less than the first view knows of what actually did happen historically. We know that the early church experienced the presence and power of the risen Christ (or the Holy Spirit, or the love of God, or the grace of God) in a vivid and impressive way, one that cannot be accounted for by memory or imagination. In the resurrection there is a victory over death and sin and all that holds man in bondage. With the resurrection the corporate life of the Christian community receives a new birth. But it is not given us to know just what God did do that Easter morning.

I think it is important to respect both these positions. And it is even more important for those who are firmly committed to one of the views to trust the integrity and faith of the holders of the other view. Both views are held by theologians far wiser than any of us. The first cannot be dismissed as over-credulous, nor the second as over-timid.

The hope of the Christian

With this discussion of the resurrection I am ready to re-defend my original statement and to conclude. To say that the Christian is fundamentally a man without hope is to say that he does not ground his faith on calculations of success or failure in any historical enterprise. His faith depends on neither the size of his wallet nor the esteem of his fellows. Neither his hopes nor his fears about what may happen to him or to his culture in the future have the power to shake his real place of confidence.

The Christian hope is not primarily a statement about the future at all. This is why there is a real question as to whether "hope" is the right word to use for the ground of Christian confidence. More exactly, what I have been doing here is to say that the Christian's faith and the Christian's hope are nearly the same thing. Our hope is based on what God has done in Christ in the past and on what he can continue to do today. And finally, at the very depth of our Christian faith, we need no guarantees for the future at all. Not even, it may be, for future survival after death. The crucifixion of Christ did not separate God from Christ. And nothing but our own disobedience can separate God from those of us who are today trying to figure out what it means to call ourselves by the name of his Son.

The Christian need have no hope; he need not be fretful about his future or any future. For through faith in the Son, he knows what God has done and is even now doing for him and his world. In Romans 14:8 Paul comes close to an explicit rejection of Christian concern for the future, rejecting, we might almost say, "Christian hope": "If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's." If in 1 Corinthians 13:13 hope is subordinated to love, here hope is subordinated to faith: "we are the Lord's," this is all we know.

The Christian is a man crossing a frozen river at the dead of night. The ice is beginning to break up, but once he starts his crossing he cannot turn back. Yet the other shore cannot be seen. He has no idea how far it is; he only knows it is there. All he does have is the certainty that each step he takes will be supported by a cake of ice and that the crossing is one that he cannot help making.

By William Hamilton, assistant professor of systematic theology at Colgate-Rochester Divinity School, author of the booklet "Faith, Sex and Love" and of the study guide on Hosea "I am God and Not Man."

a three-part discussion concerning the new

1 the spiritual center of

This is a penetrating statement written by Emil Brunner, famous Swiss theologian, concerning the nature of the YMCA. It has been slightly condensed. In a discussion of this topic at a recent meeting of the National Student YMCA and YWCA Christian Faith and Heritage Committee, Mr. Brunner's statement seemed to us to capture the essence of what we are seeking to develop in our college Christian Associations. We share it with you as a contribution to understanding the nature of the non-denominational lay Christian fellowship. Mr. Brunner writes primarily on the basis of contacts he has had with the YMCA in Europe. Nonetheless it breathes a spirit akin to much that we are currently talking about in the Student YMCA and YWCA in this

FROM ITS VERY BEGINNING the YMCA has set great store by the fact that it is not a church. It has rather exhorted its members to join a church. This conception and policy has stood the test and will remain the same in the future. The ecumenical movement, however, and more especially the creation of the World Council of Churches, has required a rethinking which, of course, has to start from and be based upon the New Testament.

If we read without prejudice what the New Testament says about the *Ecclesia*,[1] we see that this word signifies a reality which resembles the YMCA at least as much as today's so-called churches. The bodies which generally are recognized as "churches" are at least as different from the *Ecclesia* of the New Testament as the YMCA is. For *Ecclesia* is nothing else than a brotherhood of people bound together with Jesus Christ and with each other by the Holy Spirit and leading their daily life in such fellowship. The *Ecclesia* is described to us as a common life under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, a common life in faith, in hope and in love, where what we are used to call characteristic features of a church——"ecclesiastical" institutions, ecclesiastical offices, ecclesiastical activities——do not play an essential role. The following points deserve attention:

1. There is no distinction between priests and laymen but the whole community is "a priestly people." Everybody is expected to act in a priestly manner.

2. There is no sacrificial rite, but on the contrary, by the sacrifice of Christ all other sacrifices are done away forever. Each member of the community is supposed to dedicate his or her life to God as an acceptable sacrifice.

3. Each member of the community is called upon for service in the community. There is no difference between "active" and "passive" members, but, as each organ within a living organism exercises its function to the benefit of the whole, thus everybody within the *Ecclesia* is an organ fit for a function of which a "service" is expected and rendered. Each member is a servant of the community. Non-active members have to be regarded as non-functioning dead organs and be cut off.

4. There are certainly special Sunday meetings of the community for "worship." But again, what matters most is that everybody contributes to the edification of the community, that nobody is passed over because some want to monopolize speaking.

5. But these Sunday meetings of the community are not called Divine Service. On the contrary the daily life of the individual Christians, who dedicate their life to God as sacrifice, explicitly receive this title. Therefore, everyday life in the service of men in love is divine service.

6. For this reason there is such a gulf, characteristic of our ecclesiastical life, between "Divine Service and every day life," between a "spiritual" and a "profane" realm outside. Everything is "spiritual"—even the most secular thing, if it is done united with Christ; then also eating and drinking, then also trivial everyday work is "spiritual" if it is done "in Christ."

If therefore the members of a YMCA by their faith are really united with Christ, and if the love which is flowing out of this faith unites them with the fellow members whom they feel as brethren, and if these members regard their activities as service to Christ and to the brethren and sacrifice their lives in this service, they are *Ecclesia* as well as any church. This insight is of the utmost importance because it permits us to conceive our "secular" work, be it in sport groups, in professional evening classes, in manual work of the Boy's Town in Indian slums, as spiritual work, as "church work in the meaning of the New Testament." Not the subject itself, Bible study or sports, but the motive for the one as for the other: to serve Christ and to serve the brother, constitutes the difference between spiritual and non-spiritual. It is not the affiliation with a church that makes our work Christian, but the fact of belonging to Christ.

[1] In New Testament usage *Ecclesia* means the Church. Literally it signifies an "assembly of citizens called out."

testament church and the lay christian fellowship

the campus christian association

country.

To meet more fully the concerns we are discussing in our movement these days, a related aspect needs to be developed. That is the way in which many of our Associations include inquirers and sceptics who are not conscious of being members of a community of "priestly people" united in Christ. Would this statement then apply to an inner nucleus at the heart of the Association? The commentaries which follow the statement deal with this and other issues raised by Mr. Brunner.

The statement originally appeared in "Toward Our Second Century," a preview of the 1955 Centenary of the World's YMCA to be held in Paris this summer.

On the other hand, this insight makes us independent from the principle of "practical success." There are other organizations today——the UN, UNESCO, international emergency organizations or individual governments——doing the same as we do, seen from outside, doing it even better than we can because of more money available to them. Yet it is quite another thing, as it does not spring forth from the source of love of Christ and therefore is not realized in the same spirit. Our social work does not have its value in itself, but as demonstration of the love of Christ. The YMCA has little importance as an institution of welfare. The YMCA either is a form of *Ecclesia* or it is nothing. If it is not *Ecclesia* it is a useless, amateurish duplicate of public welfare institutions.

Thus we arrive at this peculiar statement: the YMCA is inwardly *Ecclesia*, church in the meaning of the New Testament; outwardly it is a welfare institution for young people of all nations. The fact that it unites this interior with this exterior makes its character and is the basis of its peculiar, incomparable activity. There are, therefore, two dangerous deviations which may cause the YMCA to miss its destiny. The first: that it loses its soul, that it ceases to be *Ecclesia*. The second: that it loses its particular body, that it becomes a mere institution of one of the churches, a "church youth group" whose main purpose is Bible study. The first one is a wrong extraversion, the second a wrong introversion. In the first case, the YMCA ceases to be Christian; in the second case it ceases to be YMCA. The Centenary of the year 1955 must help such local and national YMCAs all over the world to grasp this insight of the homogeneousness of body and soul and to win back the soul which the YMCA has lost in many places. There is less danger for the exterior, for the "body" of the YMCA; for this exterior social service is evident to everybody and can be started rather easily. The main danger is the first, the loss of the Christian soul, the character as *Ecclesia*.

The most important task of the *Ecclesia* in the New Testament is to make Christ known to all men. Whether this is done by swimming pools, evening classes, sport training or Bible study and prayer is not the main question. What matters only is the aim that young people came into a living contact with Christ. This, however, can only happen if the leaders of the YMCA are living Christians and if they have a living spiritual fellowship together with others where the Bible is studied, where it is talked about, and where experiences are shared in a heartfelt, sincere, brotherly manner. The soul of the YMCA cannot live without being nurtured and purified by the sources of faith.

The YMCA is a proof that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is no "religion" but the love of men based upon the love of God. Therefore it is possible to bear witness to Christ by simple exterior services. Where there is real love toward men, there Christ is at work; where Christ really is at work, there is genuine love toward men. The foundation of the *Ecclesia* is God's love in Jesus Christ, received and accepted by human hearts. There is no need for a creed, even the Paris Basis,[1] a model of brevity. Who loves Christ and is willing to obey him belongs to it. Who does not love him and does not obey him does not belong to it. The love to Christ is the sole criterion; the unquestionable manifestation of this love to Christ is love to the brethren, willingness to serve the brethren. Therefore the "Christian religion" is something so simple, something so little ecclesiastical, something so laymanlike. That is why the YMCA has such an extraordinarily good chance to serve Christ. The churches have their particular values and services. They have much to give to their members which the YMCA cannot provide. But, it is able to give the most essential to young people if its soul, its hidden innermost, is the communion with Christ which moves it to act and guides it, that is to say if it really is a kind of *Ecclesia*.

[1] "The Young Men's Christian Associations seek to unite those young men who, regarding Jesus Christ as their God and Saviour according to the Holy Scriptures, desire to be His disciples in their faith and in their life, and to associate their efforts for the extension of His Kingdom amongst young men."

the spiritual center of the campus C. A.

continued

2

An evaluation which points out that Mr. Brunner does not do justice to the full record in the New Testament concerning the "Ecclesia." By Robert Mickey, assistant professor of religion at Franklin and Marshall College and a minister in the Evangelical and Reformed Church.

I HAVE BEEN ASKED TO COMMENT on this paper of Professor Brunner's, and my comments will be explicitly critical. It seems to me that he distorts, on the one hand, the Biblical material and on-going Christian experience, and on the other hand *effectively* communicates an interpretation of the life of a community of Christians which is more properly called angelic than human.

First, it seems to me that his usage of the phrase "the so-called churches," and the implied prophetic criticism of them, ignores the fact that all that he writes comes out of the life of these self-same churches. It is well to note and remember that Professor Brunner writes out of a background of continental European experience, in which the Church has been so intimately involved with the national states of Europe that it has often appeared to provide at best a sort of "religious halo" over quite pagan behavior. And in this sense we may read this as a Christian criticism of the existing churches: a critique of the churches in the terms provided by their own creedal affirmations.

Yet, for many who know personally the life of the churches in the United States, other words would have to be used. I believe that whether writing out of the European or the American scene, the contrasts drawn are essentially caricatures of the Church and of the churches. The "picture" which is effectively communicated is that of a rigid social institution, monopolized by "priests" who officiate at "sacrificial rites," and who also arrogate to themselves a monopoly of speaking. Divine Services are simply formal and lifeless occasions, woefully routine, and in the worst sense of the term professional, bare professional and cultic acts. Worship is an optional extra, something unrelated to day-to-day human experience and existence. All that really matters is to attempt to "help and love people." I cannot help but believe that this harsh and overdrawn picture conforms at least as much to a hostile imagination as it does to the on-going and empirical life of the churches in our contemporary world.

I shall comment briefly and critically upon the six points which emerge from an allegedly "unprejudiced" reading of the New Testament. Any reading which ignores, among other aspects, the references to and descriptions of the sacrament of Baptism and the sacrament of the Lord's Supper; which ignores the minimal confession that "Jesus Christ is Lord;" which ignores the role of the Apostles and of the teachers, deacons, and other officers; which ignores the central significance of the proclamation of the Good News that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself—any unprejudiced reading which leaves these out is simply *not* reading. I might add that if it is necessary to read the Biblical material this way in order to find some Christian basis for support of the YMCA, then something is sorely amiss.

To ignore the pervasive significance of the "sacramental life" as it is alluded to and interpreted in the *Gospel of John*—and then to note that there is no reference to "sacrificial rites"—is simply to confuse the entire situation. Or, again, to suggest that Christian preaching is the effort by a preacher to monopolize speaking, is to distort the meaning of the proclamation of the gospel. And, finally, to effectively ignore worship as constituting any essential characteristic of the Church, in the New Testament, is to ignore what is simply there. One misses the kind of thing implied in the following quotation from J. Robert Nelson:

> The surest test of a Church's fidelity to its essential nature is the kind of worship which is practiced in it. It is worship which differentiates the Church from every other kind of organization in society, and worship is its primary function. (Worship) is . . . the indispensable expression of our response of adoration and thanksgiving to God for what he has done for us. (*The Christian Student and the Church*, 56-7. The whole of chapter eight should be read alongside Professor Brunner's statement).

I made an opening reference to the idea that Professor Brunner's presentation of the community of Christians is properly understood as "angelic." By this is meant an understanding which seeks to ignore or to relegate to the realm of insignificance the place which institutions do perforce play in human life. Existing churches do have organizational patterns, and these sometimes do get in the way of the expressions of "Christian love." But they also make possible ways of expressing this self-same love which simply are not available to the single human being. I gather this is what Professor Brunner is really stating, except that he suggests not Church institutions, but YMCA institutions, are the proper expression and this seems to me to be unreal and unfair.

There are two final comments. One is that as the article reads, it seems to me to be a reformulation of the "gospel of works." When one reads, for example, that "who loves Christ and is willing to obey Him belongs to it (the Church). Who does not love Him and does not obey Him

does not belong to it" the question comes to mind: *does any one belong?* One can present the meaning of Christian love in terms which make it the Christian's law—without any other result than to bring on a sense of hopeless inability. This sounds like moral exhortation—but it does not indicate the experience of forgiveness—and of being forgiven when one has not obeyed Him who is the Head of the Church. The Gospel is surely more than a descriptive exhortation on love—it is also love to the loveless—made manifest in and through the sacrament of Holy Communion.

The other comment is that this article presents an interpretation of the Christian fellowship, cut off effectively from the one source which makes it possible. One thinks of a whole electrification program for a new community, with transformers, power lines—with all things necessary save one. Someone forgot the Generator. The kind of Christian community which Professor Brunner here describes makes exactly this impression.

The Christian community is first of all a community of believers, a community of worship, a community which is called into existence and sustained by the proclamation of the gospel and by the sacramental life. If what he means is that the communal life of Christian worship, and all that this entails, is the "particular role and services" of the churches and constitutes that which they "give to their members," if it is the churches which present men and women with a "living contact with Christ," if it is the churches which nurture those "living Christians" in a living spiritual fellowship, then the YMCA becomes simply one among a whole host of vocational and institutional frameworks in which these selfsame Christians live.

3

The values of Mr. Brunner's statement for the Student YMCA and YWCA.
By Edward L. Nestingen, program secretary, the National Student YMCA.

THE MAIN VALUE of Mr. Brunner's statement is that it helps us face squarely the question, *What is the religious center of a Student Y or CA?* His main point is that a YMCA (YWCA or CA) is a fellowship of "people bound together with Jesus Christ and with each other by the Holy Spirit and leading their daily life in such fellowship." This, he maintains, is the heart of the New Testament record of the community which came into existence in response to the life and death of Christ; it is the heart of what every Christian congregation should be; and it is that which is common both to ecclesiastical and to lay Christian fellowships.

Several observations are in order on how this statement applies to Student Ys in the U.S.A. I will also comment on Robert Mickey's criticism of Mr. Brunner's statement.

1. Can there be any question that every Y or CA must find its center in Jesus Christ? Sheer logical analysis indicates the answer. Nevertheless at least two difficulties confront many Ys and CAs on this crucial matter.

The most serious of these difficulties is that many members do not, in all honesty, feel power and direction in their lives from knowing Jesus Christ. Actually they know very little about him. They do not read the gospels or the epistles and so do not know who he was; nor why those who knew him were so deeply moved by him; nor what the community—the *ecclesia*—which is described in Acts and in the epistles, was like. If they do read the New Testament, they do not study the commentaries which help one understand these experiences against the concepts of current "scientific" world views. Finally, if all this is done, there seems to be no time to often talk frankly and openly with others about what Jesus Christ means in terms of the everyday decisions and perplexities that confront all of us.

Thus the concept of being "bound together with Jesus Christ" does not have *personal* meaning for many "Y" members. The New Testament record tells of people who responded personally and deeply to this Man because they knew he could deliver them, or because he actually had delivered them from a bondage of self-centeredness into a freedom they could find in no other way.

The New Testament *ecclesia* or "brotherhood of people bound together with Jesus Christ" was a new experience—a new creation—a new relationship with one another and with God. The members did not create it; they knew that something beyond their own powers had broken down the barriers between themselves and other persons. They had been freed to act in love because they knew the meaning of love through the life of Jesus Christ and of its power through his death and continuing presence. They had been freed to act with reconciliation because they had been reconciled. (cf. Eph. 2:11 ff.)

continued on next page

3 the spiritual center of the campus C. A.

continued

This, says Mr. Brunner, is the heart of the meaning of the *ecclesia*. This personal knowledge of the power and meaning of Jesus Christ should be at the heart of the Y or CA.

2. The second difficulty which many Ys and CAs face is that they do not know how to express the religious "center" of their fellowship without antagonizing or alienating many of their present or potential members. Most Ys are convinced they should have an inclusive membership, which in practice usually includes numerous skeptics, agnostics and persons of other faiths. These students are not willing or ready to make an affirmation about the power and meaning which Jesus Christ brings to the world.

This strong belief in inclusiveness is a good and healthy and essential attribute. Yet it needs to be supplemented at a very important point. In each Y there must be a nucleus of students and faculty who do want to share with one another the meaning which Jesus Christ has brought to their lives; who wish to study together the Biblical record of God's purpose and activity in the world; who endeavor to face personal as well as Association decisions in these terms; and who gladly and freely worship together.

Ideally, the Cabinet is such a group. Occasionally, where this is not possible, an "unofficial" study or fellowship group may provide this function.

When this group exists in the Y, it then can begin to assume some or all of the six characteristics of the *ecclesia* which Mr. Brunner lists.

The result is a creative basic polarity in the Association. One pole is the inclusive fellowship known for its warmth and openness to all: people come into the Association because they feel welcome and accepted; they find in it freedom, intellectual vigor and concern for the welfare of others and for social justice. The other pole is this self-aware and committed nucleus which finds its togetherness in Jesus Christ.

Then are present the conditions for both *breadth* and *depth*. Conversation between the *inquirer* and the *committed* person becomes meaningful. There can be sharing without dogmatism—a sharing about what really matters in one's life. In such conversations, each is encouraged to affirm what he truly is and lives by; and does not fear to express his deepest concerns and affirmations. This is one way to avoid both the extraversion and the introversion which Mr. Brunner warns against.

These seem to me to be the positive things Mr. Brunner is saying to us about the meaning of the New Testament *ecclesia* and the Y or the CA.

3. Robert Mickey, in his comments on Mr. Brunner's statement, does an important service. He points out that certain characteristics of the New Testament *ecclesia* (the sacraments, the creed and the proclamation of the Good News) are not mentioned by Mr. Brunner and that these were very much a part of the life of the *ecclesia* and of its direct lineal descendants, the churches. It does seem to me that Mr. Brunner was not denying this but was pointing to what he conceives the "heart" of the life of the *ecclesia* to have been.

Certainly many would have to confess that even those who are members of "gathered" congregations (cf. *The Christian Student and the Church*, pp. 24 ff.) regard the Sunday service, not as "formal and lifeless" necessarily (to use Mr. Mickey's words), but yet as *the* important aspect of the church. Few, indeed, catch Mr. Brunner's vision of the daily life of the individual Christian as "divine service." Nor do they believe it to be central in the Christian fellowship. (Cf. Acts 4:32 ff.; Eph. 4:17 ff.; 5:15 ff.; Romans 12:1-8; I John 3:14-18).

I can find no basis in what Mr. Brunner writes to justify the criticism that he "ignores" worship. His fourth and fifth points explicitly refer to worship but call us to an awareness that what *all* of us do in our daily lives is an expression of dedication to Him whom we worship; *otherwise* our worship is empty. He calls us to a renewed understanding of the central worth and importance of every member in the Christian congregation or fellowship—indeed, to a Christian laymanship akin to Luther's understanding of the "priesthood of all believers." In this renewal, he says, the YMCA (YWCA) has a distinctive contribution to make.

It also seems to me that Robert Mickey is one-sided in his comment that this presentation of Christian community is a "gospel of works." One of the marked emphases in the New Testament is that in this community a new relationship is known just because men are in a new relationship to God. And that this new relationship gives direction and dynamic to the lives of its members as they function in the everyday world. Persons are freed to love and to reconcile and the actuality of this experience is known by the fruits of their lives.

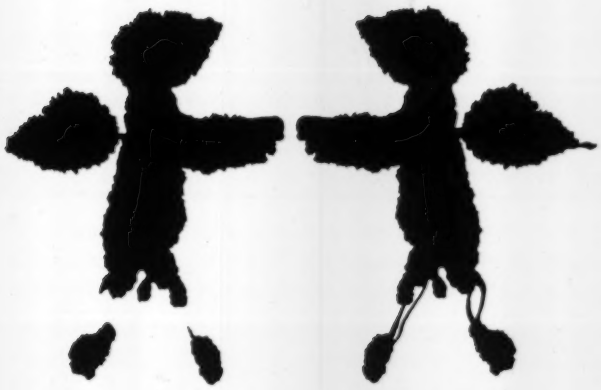
4. Other recent writings which emphasize the power and direction which flow forth from the community called together through the experience of God's love are:

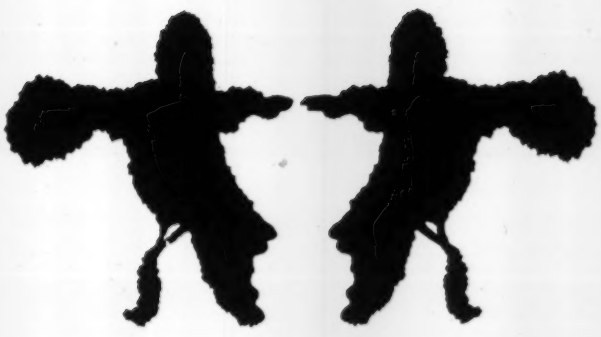
J. H. Oldham, *Life is Commitment*, esp. chapter VI.
Paul Lehmann's chapter in *Christian Faith and Social Action*, John Hutchison, editor.
Paul Lehmann's article in the January 1954 *Intercollegian*, "The Transforming Power of the Church."
Alexander Miller, *The Renewal of Man*, especially his discussion of *ethos* and *ethics*. (Reviewed in this issue).

THE INTERCOLLEGIAN INVITES CORRESPONDENCE from readers on the issues raised by Mr. Brunner's statement.

This is the first of two speeches made by Roy Fairchild at the National Student Assembly. The second speech will appear in the May issue of "The Intercollegian." At the Assembly Mr. Fairchild was the Dean of the Section: You in Search of Your Self. He is one of the most popular speakers at Pacific Coast student Christian conferences and is associate professor of psychology at Occidental College in Los Angeles.

sex and the student





LIFE DOES NOT DIFFER for us in the facts it presents us but in our interpretation of those facts. The same event can bring vastly different reactions from each of us. So it is with sex, life and love. We may be resistant to discussion of this area. Even when we are not, it is hard to articulate our feelings about it. But we must discuss it because we are inevitably involved in love, friendship and sex, if we interpret sex broadly. For most of us finding ourselves will in some measure involve the other sex.

The Bible portrays a drama of life in which the themes are alienation and separation of man from God, from himself and from other persons; the consequences of this separateness; and God's actions to overcome this disintegration of life. The Bible is an authority because it reports a Confrontation which illumines and breaks open man's deepest experiences and through the drama of Christ enriches and changes them. Does it have anything to say about sex? William Hamilton in his pamphlet *Faith, Sex and Love* replies with a resounding "Yes."

This article gives a background for the study of his helpful booklet by providing a look at perspectives which to a great extent influence the lives of all of us. These are the views of: Moralistic Restraint; Natural Expression; Romantic Love, and Christian Interpersonal Relations.[1] These may be found, in some aspects, side by side in any particular person. They are oversimplified here:

1. Moralistic restraint

This school of thought is likely to accent the rational and moral sides of man by rigidly controlling or denying

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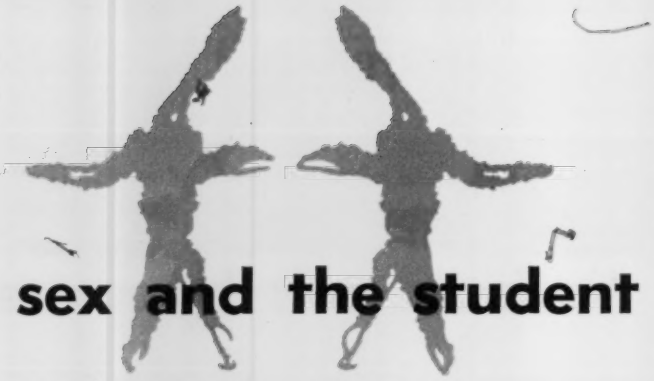

sex and the student

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the physical. Sex is awful. This view is characteristic of an older order which is slowly passing, but it is still a powerful force today. As Dr. Kinsey has indicated, this view is more typical of those who have completed a high school education but who have not gone beyond it.

This view seeks to eliminate sex from life as completely as possible without committing race suicide. Like toilet functions, it is a necessary but undiscussed area of life. Even in marriage, respectability may be equated with sexlessness. A well trained conscience would see that sex was saved for marriage but even then it was not fully acceptable.

For a woman to engage in intercourse outside of marriage meant severe social punishment. Detection through obvious pregnancy, disease, or prying eyes brought social isolation and the prevention of respectable marriage, woman's only vocation. Even the masculine ideal was virtually sexless although it was readily granted that his abundance of "animality" might be expressed in impure thoughts, "dirty" stories and sowing a wild oat or two.

With this approach children are conditioned effectively by taboo on sex discussion and by the horror of adults at any sign of sex curiosity. The fact that more than 45% of college students today have been told *nothing* about sex by their parents indicates this view is far from dead.

Some assumptions of this view are that man's "higher" faculties should allow him to control this strong biological (largely male) urge which would invade life if one did not keep the dikes of conscience continually reinforced by fear and punishment. Control the woman and you control all. Men were moral because women were and they because of necessity. Here is one of the strong dynamics of the double standard. This view did not quite affirm celibacy but the Greek view of the superiority of the spiritual to the physical was obvious.

This view did tend to prevent pregnancy outside of marriage. It did tend to preserve the technical virginity of women. It did prevent disease—today a major problem. According to Duvall,[2] there were 750,000 new cases of venereal disease in the first six months of 1948. In 1945 the number of new cases exceeded that of diphtheria, malaria, pneumonia, polio, undulant fever, smallpox, T.B., typhoid, and typhus combined. In 1947, the death rate for syphilis was seven times as great as for polio! It did tend to keep families intact, though often in cold formality only.

The main strength of this view is that sex was seen as having *social* implications—and this is a concept we must preserve and enrich.

Undoubtedly the "moralistic restraint" view is breaking down. The wars, exposure to other cultures, the equality of women have been powerful battering rams. Along with these we find that urban life has depersonalized us—our neighbors can no longer control us through gossip. There is more libido because of increased health and improved nutrition. Sex has become a new "fertility cult" in the U.S.A. with hymns to its god (84 of the latest 90 hit parade tunes make sexual allusions). There is a new cult symbol, the female breast (which has all but become a vestigial organ in terms of the function God intended). Increased mobility of young people, provided by cars, lessens social control. With little to communicate deeply about, with poorly defined inner standards, and with real ignorance about sex, mother's "Now be a good girl or boy" has little chance to influence behavior, with the result that many have swung to the "back-to-nature" view.

2. Natural expression

This view says to us: "Look, whenever you try to get rid of sex it pops up again. You're fighting a losing battle. Sex is obvious, normal, natural. Let the urge be expressed. The Samoans don't go through the struggles you have to put up with. Kinsey has shown that you can't live by those repressive standards. Sex is an irresistible flood, a delightful urge, and lots of fun. If you can't find any meaning in life, at least physical vitality is unambiguous. Why build a dam of taboos against it? Let the boredom of life be punctuated with the zest which sense stimulation brings."

Kinsey's "grade school educated group" would live by this but not be able to articulate it. Bertrand Russell would be happy to do both.

"Prove that this is harmful," so this view goes on, "if precautions are taken against pregnancy, V. D., and openly teasing the public. Let the repressed busy-bodies stay out of my business!"

Between these two views there are those among us who wander to and fro, shifting from guilt to glee and back again, to use Dr. Duvall's words.

Now notice this: both of these views have the same assumption about sex! It is an irresistible biological flood, which acts autonomously on the person—a segment of the person unintegrated with other personality aspects. The moral restraint view tries to dam the flood; the nature view says, "Let 'er roll!"

3. Romantic love

Most popular among the college group, this view asserts that sex should be in the context of love. In fact being in love may be more important than whom you love. Finding

the right partner is very important and sex in its serious expressions is all right depending on whether one has found him or her. Sex for the female is broader than the physical and includes dreams of home, affection and children. However, even in romantic dating you get a kind of sparring: the male tries to go as far as he can sexually, the female tries to stop him as soon as she can.

Through it all, love and emotional tang are considered synonymous. If this excitement (ordinarily found in most new experiences) leaves, for the romantic, love has evaporated. Because of emotion, prospective mates are idealized and seen as we want them to be, not as they are and will be after marriage. Because of emotion, there is a naive faith in the future and the person as she is (curlers, shaved legs and all) is not considered. Nor are the real adjustments—economic, in-laws, etc.—planned for. Dullness and boredom, a part of every marriage at times, are not prepared for.

For the woman, sex, unless accompanied by endearments and romance, dulls the picture although she can admit she likes it. Sex is seen as frosting on the cake of lifelong courtship, an assurance of being wanted, a way of keeping romantically excited.

For both man and woman sex is closely related to ego needs so it may be readily used among immature people as the focus for a power struggle. A woman, at least before marriage, becomes as stimulating as possible to the man in order to gain this emotional relationship. The man may both like it and feel trapped by it and so be resentful. Each may be threatened by attitudes of possessiveness, jealousy, exploitation, emotional desertion. And when the excitement has mellowed, two people may find that, though they were in romantic love, they now don't like each other.

4. Christian interpersonal relations

When I speak of Christianity I mean that movement of life, thought and behavior which was inaugurated by the impact of Jesus Christ on the first century and on later generations. Faith means one's affirmative response to this impact on his life and a willingness to see life, all aspects of it, from Christ's perspective.

Can we capture something of this perspective in reference to sex? We realize in doing this that each of the preceding positions has both real strengths and weaknesses.

The first major affirmation is startling in light of the moralistic point of view: *Sex should be taken more seriously and should be more deeply satisfying than it is!* According to no less an authority than Augustine, separation or sin has detracted from its true purposes and enjoyment. Sex is good if expressed in fidelity. A man shall ". . . cleave unto his wife and they shall become one flesh." Fidelity means a willingness to take unlimited responsibility for the partner's total welfare. The Biblical view, in opposition to the Greek view, maintains that the body is good when seen in the context of God's creation.

The second affirmation is that *men and women were made to complete one another*—anatomically, psychologically, socially, spiritually . . . although existentially they never do quite.

The moralistic view, back-to-nature view and romantic view, being partial perspectives, cannot discover the depths of sex. Each emphasizes just one aspect of man's conscience or biology or emotion.

It is only when we realize our complex nature, that we make sense of sex and life. Seward Hiltner has said, "Man, as a personal spirit, is not something ethereal with a body temporarily attached nor is he an animal with the misfortune of a lately developed brain that complicates an otherwise simple biological existence."[3] He is not animal or angel. He is man, created man.

It is a lack of *wholeness* or *integration* which causes most trouble in sex and human relations. The great commandment, loving God with the whole mind, heart, soul and strength, and neighbor as self, is our major criterion for social or personal health. Are you *all there* in your response to reality? Sex, unintegrated with other aspects of personality and with relatedness in love, not only robs sex of its true function but reflects the schizoid condition which is bound to bring some disintegration with loss of self, loneliness and cut-offness.

As to a definition of love, try this for size. "Love is a relationship in which each person can become himself wholeheartedly and in which each gives the kind of affection and care which brings out the best in each." This is close to *agape* love of the New Testament and incorporates desire (*eros*) and likeminded companionship (*philia*). It is similar to Martin Buber's I-Thou relationship in which two people are willing to freely respond to each other without any kind of manipulation, whether of force, or emotion or creating guilt. They interact, trust, listen and contribute on every level. This is communion in which God's spirit is present. There is less sheer independence but more I-ness and individuality.

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sex and the student

continued

Now to comment on three assertions made by William Hamilton in *Faith, Sex and Love.*

1. *"Sexual intercourse is a symbol of a relationship. Because of its very quality it can symbolize only a particular kind of relationship."*

And yet many sex episodes are not only *not* a part of mutual, individualizing sort of love, but they express many intentions foreign to its nature. Many diverse motives are channeled into the sex act. For example, the girl who says, "I am so hungry for affection that if a boy shows me even a little tenderness there is nothing I would not do for him," is seeking for security. The prostitute who humiliates men who look like her father is channeling hostility. The frat man who builds up a sex record may be gaining status from his brothers. *Et cetera.* Sex in operation always reflects a person's state of interpersonal attitudes . . . fear, impulsiveness, or what not. So much of what we see is not really sex at all!

When an I-Thou relation exists in marriage, sex has many functions to play in the relationship: tension release, building of mutual respect, self-discovery, family building. For the Protestant, sex has the two main functions of re-creation of the relationship, and procreation of children. It is only when a couple has grown together on many levels—work, play, speech and thought—that sex can symbolize this relation. In fact, it is a most sensitive indicator of the health of those other levels. Sex can focus one's love. In an I-Thou relation, God is found in it. Such intensity is only found in fidelity.

2. *"Sexual intercourse is an act of union in which each person does something to the other."*

It always leaves a mark on the personality and the relationship. It was just two years after Bertrand and Dora Russell wrote a book encouraging a tolerant attitude toward adultery in mates that they were divorced—on the ground of adultery! For women especially, intercourse may develop an emotional-social bond which is increasingly strong. Needs for this person are created where none existed before. And how many scars can be seen as a result of unreturned love after sex relations?

Today's emphasis is on sex technique, the performing of this act efficiently. Hence, the rationalization of testing our compatibility before marriage! It never seems to occur (do they want it to?) that it is the *struggle together* in the sexual as well as other realms, that builds a couple together and allows them to learn tenderness, loving concern, forgiveness through their initial awkwardness in early marriage.

3. *"Sexual intercourse involves a kind of knowledge about another person and ourselves that is communicated in no other way."*

It is a knowledge of inside acquaintance. You may discover through this act, in fidelity, what it means to become a whole person, as you give yourself with abandon and receive wholeheartedly the love of wife or husband. We teach each other what it means to be completely loved while remaining completely ourselves, even though we never reach this goal. We learn what it is to be a man or woman. And the first occasion of such learning should be when wholeheartedness, unlimited responsibility, security and comfort exist.

A Christian understanding of sex would say that between married lovers who have developed togetherness and mutuality on many levels, sex (whether through handholding, kissing or intercourse) would communicate and symbolize that mutuality in a language precious to both and deeper than words. Sex becomes a vehicle of communication as well as a way of passing life on. If a vehicle has nothing appropriate to carry we idolize the instrument and it becomes a sensual rather than a sacramental expression.

Now it does not follow that, because sex can under certain circumstances enhance and express community, it is always necessary to such communion of persons. Indeed there are times in marriage when sexual intercourse is impossible because of health or other reasons such as location. There are *other* vehicles of communication—words, gesture, art, music, silence——giving and receiving the work of hand, heart or head. So there can be purposeful elimination of one or more modes of communication by a given person without saying these are "bad" or "lower" in nature than the vehicles we are using. Our Master was unmarried but it was he who enunciated the basic Judaic view that it was not good that man should be alone, and that a man should leave his father and mother and cleave unto his wife and they should become one flesh. It's hard to find the integration and wholeness which we seek. Tension will remain, as in all creativity. Perhaps Herbert Farmer's modification of the famous prayer by Augustine will sum up for us: "Thou hast made us for thyself and for each other and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in thee, in each other and in each other in thee."

[1] These titles suggested by Dr. Seward Hiltner.
[2] Duvall, S. *Men, Women and Morals.*
[3] Hiltner, S. *Sex Ethics and the Kinsey Report.*

Other suggested readings for those interested:

May, Rollo—*Man's Search for Himself.*
Bertocci, P.—*The Human Venture in Sex, Love and Marriage.*
Duvall and Hill—*When you Marry.*
Pike, James—*If You Marry Outside Your Faith.*
Tillich, P.—*The Courage to Be.*
Hiltner, S.—*Self-Understanding.*
Bailey, D. S.—*The Mystery of Love and Marriage.*
Hamilton, William—*Faith, Sex and Love.*
25c; 5 for $1 from National Student YMCA or YWCA.

By Prentiss L. Pemberton, Associate Director of the Danforth Foundation in St. Louis. In this capacity he is instrumental in providing opportunities for college students and faculty members to obtain training in Christian resources related to their special major or academic discipline. "Pem" was formerly on the national staff of the YMCA in the New England region. More recently he taught Christian Ethics at Andover-Newton. The address he gave at the National Student Assembly is the basis of this article.

the social responsibility of the Christian

Woodcut by Frans Masereel: N. Y. Public Library

TODAY WE ARE CONSTANTLY REMINDED of the cultural crisis in which mankind struggles. Two world wars and the emergence of blatantly anti-Christian cultures have highlighted forty years of slaughter, destruction and chaos. Students have become personally conscious of this crisis in the increasing failure of moderns to carry through successfully even the most elemental activities of life.

Marriage is being transformed into a new kind of institution resting upon the feelings of two people—a tenuous foundation when these feelings are not soundly grounded morally and spiritually. The parent-child, adult-youth relationships are producing misunderstanding, hostility and conflict of increasingly serious dimensions. Growing old in a society which glorifies youth is becoming pathetic for many elderly persons who feel they are no longer needed or wanted. When men and women cannot marry, rear children and grow old within some stable system of meaning, every aspect of life becomes insecure.

At this very moment when our gospel should be providing its "good news" we Christians are not clear spokesmen for this gospel. Gone is the easy optimism of an earlier era, when churchmen so confidently proclaimed Christian answers to all social problems. In its place is a new search for understanding in theology and reality in worship. As yet these emerging interests in theology and worship have not been made incisively relevant to the critical political, racial, economic and cultural problems of our times.

My challenge to you students of the 1954 Assembly is that you become a disciplined minority committed to a critical inquiry concerning Christian meanings, to profound worship, and to experimental efforts to make such religious experiences relevant to social issues.

Let us imagine a highway traffic accident. A Christian comes upon the scene. His neighbor love immediately prompts him to render first aid to those injured. We may think of this as *remedial* action. Such remedial action is always a primary and inescapable demand of Christian love. But this is not all that is required of sensitive, intelligent Christian love. Christian love must also be concerned for *preventive* action. What about the dangerous curve in the road practically inviting accidents? Could better designing at least render future accidents less probable? In every area of social maladjustment there is need for both remedial and preventive acts of love. I believe the four following bases for Christian concern will provide both remedial and preventive action.

1. Loving deeds of thankful men

Christian action is a repentant, obedient response to God's grace reconciling sinners unto himself. Such action is not the good deed of a noble man; it is the loving deed of a thankful man. The formula is not "works for salvation" but "fruits of salvation."

A key text here is Christ's word in John: "If you love me, keep my commandments." Such an approach rules out moralistic compulsion; everything rests upon a love response. Here we are reminded of the greatest athletic coaches who motivate men to all-out effort, not by force, but by evoking love and loyalty.

2. Acting without calculation or sentimentality

Christian love is expressed by a repentant sinner for other sinners, whether repentant or non-repentant. Such action is not sentimental, does not expect "too much" of other people, is not disillusioned when their response is unappreciative or even hostile. Since the "well-spring" of action is the gratitude one feels because of what God has done in one's own life, it is not based on any calculation of pragmatic results. Christians love others because Christ first loved them, and because they believe in the divine potentialities in others.

3. Realism about counter-balancing power

Christian action appreciates the divine importance of social institutions. There is a key reason why such action becomes *preventive* as well as *remedial*. It is by reforming

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institutions or developing entirely new ones that a highway can be remodeled. Our Biblical tradition has explicitly stated that such institutions as family, property and government are divinely ordained. Recall here St. Paul's classic statement in Romans 13 that the powers that be are ordained by God.

We must be careful to note a unique interpretation which has been developed in Christian theology concerning these social institutions. In the early centuries our church fathers with almost complete agreement concluded that these social institutions had been established by God because of man's sin. Back in Paradise (*i.e.*, man as God created him to be; man in his "essence" as contrasted with his "existence") there had been no need for institutions of property and government, although many saw the family as part of creation itself. This is very different from Aristotle's notion that institutions grow out of human experiences as naturally as the oak grows out of the acorn. This Christian view is profoundly realistic. It does not glorify any institution as good in itself; it discerns that institutions are essentially good for men because of human frailties.

Christian realism towards social institutions led to the insight that there must be counter-balancing power within all institutions. Sinful man, when a leader, must be constrained by limited authority. In early centuries this meant that God, as final judge, was over all political rulers and property holders. During the medieval period it was further seen that God could ordain limiting authority right here on earth. John of Salisbury in the twelfth century taught that if a king became tyrannical he could be slain by his subjects. Another medieval church teaching held that peasants in dire need could move onto the idle lands of an estate. Political and economic power was to be neither arbitrary nor absolute.

This Christian realism and the need for counter-balancing power in all social institutions has been a significant force underlying the development of democracy and economic justice. Checks and balances in government, opposing parties in politics, big unions to balance big business, a "mixed economy" with private, public and cooperative enterprises all in operation—these are processes which put into practice this Christian insistence upon counter-balancing power in social institutions. Arbitrary human power in any human form has always been contrary to our Biblical tradition.

4. Perceiving all social activities in terms of God's action in history

Christian action is performed by those who see such action within a larger context of God's action in history. Throughout the Bible men saw their political, social and economic activities either as furthering or blocking what God was doing. It is urgent today that Christians seek this larger view of everything taking place in our time. What is God doing amid these forces?

Take modern technology, for example. What is God doing through these wheels amid wheels? Surely he has led man into this age, by means of our Protestant insistence that each person have the right to education and free thought. Such opportunities have enabled men to become scientists, engineers, technicians in their freely chosen vocations. Such activity gives birth to technology. Yet everywhere technology is seen as crushing the spiritual life of man. The question still must be raised: "What is God doing in technology?" I believe he is offering mankind the opportunity to provide physical well-being and cultural enrichment to everyone—not just to limited numbers in upper classes.

There remains the critical danger that man will not so use this opportunity. Woe then to modern man. Recall the Old Testament story of God leading the people into the Promised Land "flowing with milk and honey." Yet there, in Deuteronomy 8, we find the divine warning which we moderns need so much, as we stand on the edge of *our* promised Land: "If thou do at all forget the Lord thy God . . . ye shall surely perish. As the nations which the Lord destroyeth before your face, so shall ye perish" (vv. 19 and 20).

Practical suggestions

On the basis of these four points here are some practical suggestions for Christian tactics:

1. As Christians we ought to begin our action in worship. Only when we, like the prodigal son, are so confronted by God that we "come to ourselves" will we be the humble, loving, searching spirits able to affirm, to yield and to be open to other valid points of view. All of these are essential to creative social action.

2. As Christians we must discipline ourselves to study problems upon which we want to act. Love and goodwill cannot be substitutes for knowledge and understanding.

3. As Christians we must humbly yet firmly take stands on issues. Study cannot fully resolve all confusion on complex issues. Yet we must have the courage to take stands in the light of the best understanding we have been able to achieve.

4. As Christians we must remain open to new truth, hence to the possibility of altering our stands or of taking new ones. The longer I study social conflict the more I am impressed that blind and inflexible loyalties constitute a major block to constructive action. Surely our Christian basis as repentant sinners beginning with worship should empower us to join parties, to favor particular economic policies, and to take all other action, not as dogmatists, but as learners.

The cultural crisis mentioned in the opening paragraph can be faced, I believe, only as the Christian Church finds profound bases and sound tactics for social action. Whether or not my proposals contribute toward such needs, I challenge each one of you to set yourselves to this task.

WORSHIP SERVICE

Christian community is revolutionary

INVOCATION

Our Father, make us ready for the great adventure of living. We do not pray for immunity from risks: we pray for courage to face risks. We do not ask to be saved out of the world, we ask for strength to ally ourselves with the saviors of the world, of which the greatest and truest Savior is our Lord, Jesus Christ.

HYMN: *Awake, my soul, stretch every nerve*

SCRIPTURE: Romans 12:3-8, Revised Standard Version

HYMN: *O God, in whose great purpose an age is but a day*

PRAYER (read in unison)

Lord, who has set in men's hearts thine ideal of liberty, illumine all mankind with the knowledge of that truth which makes us free.

Lord, who hast set in men's hearts thine ideal of equality, reveal unto all mankind that in common sonship to thee, and in this alone, is the inalienable right of equal manhood.

Lord, who throughout the ages hast set working amid the peoples of the earth the leaven of thine ideals: so that ancient wrongs are swept away, ancient barriers broken down, ancient oppressions shattered: look thou in mercy upon our world; send forth with new power these thy great and revolutionary ideals, thy liberty, thy equality, thy brotherhood among all people. Amen.[1]

MEDITATION

Nicholas Berdyaev, Russian philosopher who trudged the long road from Marxism to Christianity, says that if religious rebirth is possible it is only on the ground of the revelation of the religious meaning of secular culture and earthly liberation, of the revelation of truth about humanity. The Bible states over and again that the declaration of the will of God is at the same time the declaration of the rights of man, the revelation of the divine in humanity. For Berdyaev the revolution was not radical enough. Christians must not merely denounce their secularist opponents, or comfortably lay the blame for everything upon them; they must out-think, out-live, and out-love their opponents. They must produce something better.[2]

The real revolution results in the explosion of the soul. As Toyohiko Kagawa, Japanese Christian, says, "On account of their love, sinners cease to sin, men of poverty are deprived of their prestige, the privileged classes lose their status, and authorities in high positions feel themselves in jeopardy. These revolutions are all the burstings of the power that love contains. But love will remain love despite its dangers! What a contradiction! What irony! But since it is a fact, we can only accept it. Why is love such a peril to every stable order? There is a reason for it. To attend a sick person requires love. To inaugurate a revolution is an exhibition of love! To restore a sinner is love, too! Love runs these risks forever! Whatever shrinks from risk cannot be love. Love means taking a chance. The crisis love produces we call a cross. Love means creating existence where there had been none. Love is what changes darkness into light, sinners into saints, and life on earth into the Heavenly Kingdom. Love possesses this adventurous quality and whenever it is called into play, it plays an active role. Love is identical with activity. Love is the explosion of a soul!"[3]

HYMN: *Where cross the crowded ways of life*

PRAYER

O God, speak to our hearts when men grow faint for fear, and the love of many grows cold, and there is distress of the nations upon earth. Keep us resolute and steadfast in the things that cannot be shaken, abounding in hope and knowing that our labor is not in vain in thee. Restore our faith in the omnipotence of good; renew the love which never faileth, and make us to lift up our eyes and behold, beyond the things which are seen and temporal, the things which are unseen and eternal. Amen.

Prepared by D. Ned Linegar. Resources used: (1) William Scarlett, Editor: "To Will One Thing," Diocese of Missouri, 1948. (2) Mathew Spinka: "Nicholas Berdyaev, Captive of Freedom," The Westminster Press, p. 43-44. (3) Toyohiko Kagawa: "Meditations," Harper and Brothers, 1950, No. 86.

TOWARD FRATERNITY IN FRATERNITIES

One-fourth of all college undergraduates join fraternities or sororities. In most houses the members get a vivid experience in racial and religious prejudice. Fraternities need not be snob-factories. Tendencies developed during the past decade can help to make fraternities into organizations which more nearly resemble the ideals which their charters proclaim. Unless the changes are made the fraternity system will face increasingly heavy pressure for its elimination.

Trend toward inclusiveness

When Amherst pledged a Negro in November, 1948, Phi Kappa Psi chose to disown the chapter rather than depart from its tradition of membership restrictions on racial lines.

In 1953 Phi Delta Theta suspended its chapters at Amherst and Williams for violating the constitutional clause limiting membership to those of "full Aryan blood." The suspended chapters received hundreds of letters of support from alumni and other chapters, as well as letters of determined opposition. With a prospective loss of three important chapters, a constitutional amendment to delete the "Aryan" clause was adopted at the August 1954 convention.

Four fraternities at the University of Connecticut—Lambda Chi Alpha, Sigma Nu, Kappa Sigma, and Sigma Chi—severed their national ties in compliance with a university ban on discriminatory membership policies.

Dartmouth, Columbia, and Wisconsin are prepared to withdraw recognition from any group which limits its membership for reasons of race or religion. They have set the deadline in 1960, giving the fraternities time to work for constitutional amendments at their national conventions.

It is likely that within a few years only a few national fraternities will retain exclusion clauses. Their number has fallen in six years from about twenty-five to twelve. No national sorority now has such a provision. But concern with clauses only removes an obstacle; it does not promote integration.

National committee on fraternities

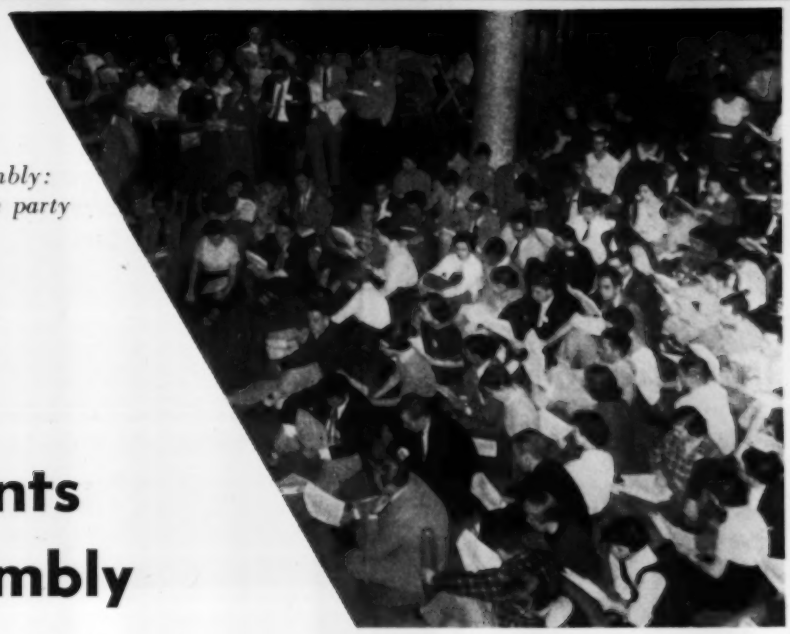
To provide facts and stimulation, a group of college educators and community leaders formed the National Committee on Fraternities in Education. This group believes that social fraternities and sororities can become democratic microcosms in which students can have genuine experiences in democratic living. The Committee plans to work toward its goal by: (1) providing information on developments in fraternity and sorority policies and programs; (2) undertaking research and study, including examination of damage to educational objectives and to personality development; (3) making information and consultation services available to fraternities and sororities, colleges, other student organizations, and the general public; (4) stimulating conferences among alumni, undergraduate fraternity leaders, college administrators and trustees, to promote understanding of the problem and leading to corrective action, and (5) encouraging colleges, national organizations and alumni to recognize the importance of permitting young people to select their own companions.

By Alfred McClung Lee, Professor in Brooklyn College. Dr. Lee is president of The National Committee on Fraternities in Education, 28 East 35th Street, New York 16, N. Y.

THE INTERCOLLEGIAN WINS AWARD

THE CERTIFICATE OF RECOGNITION (pictured at right) has been awarded to *The Intercollegian* by the National Conference of Christians and Jews for "outstanding contributions during the past year to mutual understanding and respect among people of diverse backgrounds through the media of mass communications." The awarding committee singled out for special mention *Your Freedom Is In Trouble* by Paul Lehmann, the study booklet used in preparation for the National Student Assembly.

The National Conference of Christians and Jews annually awards its Certificate of Recognition for achievement in theatre, television, advertising, books and magazines.



at the Assembly:
New Year's eve party

comments about the assembly

From students on NSCY Planning Committee, January 28-30

"This was the first time we had the experience of sharing deeply-held convictions on issues of great importance to us."

"We had not talked with one another like this before. We had not been in groups in which this could happen."

"Work groups based on the five study booklets should be in every campus Y and CA program."

From a staff member in Texas

"We took a long step with this Assembly away from what had become a rather mechanical legislative process, toward a national movement in which local Association members have an opportunity to make a thoughtful contribution. I feel we have not always been honest with ourselves when we have asked students to legislate detailed program emphases and policy in one week's time. We now have a better understanding of the necessity for undergirding our social action with an intelligent comprehension of our Christian faith."

From the Pacific Northwest

"I thought the Message a stroke of genius. It is an accurate reflection of the students I see daily in our Y; and as a movement I hope we can be aware that this is what we are currently working with."

From the South

"The one thing that contributed most to our delegation's total experience was our confrontation with such a large, diverse, and stimulating group of students and adults. None of us had ever been to an interracial conference before or had experienced so many different religious and social points of view. It was a conversion experience for many. The other thing that impressed me greatly was the Assembly study booklets and the use made of them in the work groups and sections at the Assembly."

From New England

"My major criticism is that for students as well as leaders the program was too crowded. Even the choicest items in the program might well have been cut, to allow time for reflection and personal conversation among friends and new acquaintances. I don't say this with a shrug and an 'oh, well, this happens at every conference' feeling. Our study booklets pointed out the futility of such a pace. I think it is wrong for us to call students apart to a conference and give them a further aversion in such hectic rush. It's bad teaching about what we say the Christian life should be."

"I lean toward the suggestion offered the Assembly that we handle more of our public affairs in smaller groups, as we did the Message. I think the whole question of how our religious groups face the social action problem is one of the most difficult facing the Y and the churches today and needs a great deal more thought all across the country."

"The Assembly preparation, particularly the pamphlets and the study that centered around them, and some of the rock-bottom thinking that went on at Assembly were about the best I've ever known. The plenary sessions were perhaps the weakest we've had. I don't lay this to the leadership alone but to the inexperience of a majority of the delegates both in procedures and in comprehension of the issues involved."

From a Mid-west delegation

"The individuals who were present at Assembly were almost universally (and with our fifty delegates, I mean universally!) moved by the experience. Their personal quests for the answer to 'Where Are You?' were greatly enhanced or actually initiated."

From an Ohio staff member

"To a far greater degree than in other assemblies I have attended, the voice of the common, everyday student Y member spoke and was heard.

"A certain limpness and acceptance of things as they are was evident in this Assembly as in much of student life today. In student Christian circles it would seem we might expect some trace of the fearlessness and conviction that has marked the pioneers and martyrs of the faith as they viewed their imperfect world. Does the possibility of total annihilation throw a pall over us, so that we feel that tinkering with the parts is useless? And that action on the real issue is unreachable, and so frightening that we better not even talk about it? Or did we, after all, deal with the most relevant problem in asking 'Where Are You?' of the individual himself, sensing that the springs of effective action lie in an integrated, committed life? Our own Associations will furnish some part of the answer in the days to come."

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book reviews

THE RENEWAL OF MAN

A twentieth century essay on justification by faith. By Alexander Miller. Doubleday and Company, 1955, 184 pp., $2.95.

In succinct and pithy phrases this book gives the decisive insights which mark the emerging revival of theology. The author is intimately acquainted with the student world. The high quality of his book is no surprise.

A treatise on justification by faith—yea, rather a confession of the author's own standing-ground and the well-spring of his own faith—this is a study to be chewed and digested, used in bull sessions and study groups and sent home to adults who should be understanding Christian faith on this level rather than on the superficial level which all too commonly marks Bible class discussions.

The book is the first of a series to appear under the general editorship of Reinhold Niebuhr. The series is designed to set forth on the level of laymen the meaning of the Christian faith for our time. Other volumes will deal with belief in God, Christian ethical living, the character of the church and the nature of sin.

This is a discussion of the doctrine on which all Protestantism is based but which, alas, Protestantism little knows. Those who do speak of justification by faith usually do so in a manner so irrelevant as to discredit the doctrine in the eyes of sophisticated men. Here is a compelling statement which deals at once with the nature of justification by faith and its interwoven relationship with the whole of human existence.

In chapter one the human situation ("at the end of the tether") is analyzed with the aid of the contemporary writings of Arthur Koestler (the ex-Communist), Graham Greene (the British Roman Catholic novelist), and Robert Penn Warren (the American poet). The writings of these men are seen to analyze the human scene as one in which there is no satisfying human answer. We need an answer which comes "not as a resolve but as a rescue."

The nature of this answer is explored in subsequent chapters. In chapter two all the human answers (including religious types of them) are rejected in favor of the Biblical understanding of encounter between man and God, in which man receives rather than constructs the saving insight. Perhaps the Biblical view is here set a bit too completely over and against its alternatives, but if this errs, it errs correctly.

This is one of the best brief presentations of the major alternatives to the Christian faith held by people today and, at the same time, clearly points out the burning questions they leave unanswered. Those who want a lively introduction to the real bases of the "faiths" by which modern man lives will find it here.

In subsequent chapters human repentance is given fresh and meaningful interpretation and all the dangers of turning "faith" in God into a new kind of human self-centeredness are not only avoided but are trenchantly pointed out for what they are—perversions of the Christian faith.

The remainder of the book deals with the Christian life transformed by justification and conformed by obedient service to God amid the life of the world. Here we find wise and penetrating discussion of the Christian's concern for the stuff of nature and history, his duties toward political and social realities and the responsibilities in them, the intellectual search that avoids both religious and anti-religious forms of dogmatism, and daily work of the man "righted" in his relationship to God.

Many questions debated at the recent National Student Assembly of the YMCA and YWCA are examined and illumined in this book. Three are:

the Biblical understanding of God's activity in the very structure of history; the Biblical understanding of community and the guidance which comes to our lives out of living in the *ethos* of this community (from this *ethos* comes our *ethic*); the specific ways in which the Christian faith gives both *power* and *direction* for transforming the injustices and tensions of the social order.

This book is highly recommended as a post-Assembly study guide for all Christian Associations. Above all, we are humbly grateful for a job performed with skill and beauty.

Edward LeRoy Long, Jr.
Associate Professor of Philosophy and Religion, Virginia Polytechnic Inst.

THE CREATIVE ENCOUNTER

Howard Thurman. Harper & Brothers, 1954, 153 pp., $2.

Few religious leaders in America have had the arresting effect on their listeners and readers that Howard Thurman has had. A man of spiritual insight, imagination and originality of expression, Thurman well deserves the nomination made recently in a national magazine as one of the "Twelve Great American Preachers." He founded the San Francisco Church for the Fellowship of All People and served with distinction for ten years. He is now Dean of the Chapel and Professor of Spiritual Disciplines at Boston University.

In *The Creative Encounter* Dr. Thurman discusses the essence of personal religion, considered here from the viewpoint of its inner dimensions as well as its implications for the individual's external relationships. The "central act" of personal religious experience is an "encounter" with God —an encounter which results in a keen awareness of the freedom of the spirit and of the unity of purpose and the sense of wholeness which are all aspects of the meaning of God in human experience.

It is in one's private life, says Thurman, where the great issues of life are determined (p. 19) and religious experience is defined as the "conscious and direct exposure of the individual to God" (p. 20). Prayer is the primary religious experience and is defined as "the *method* by which the individual makes his own way to the temple of guilt within his own spirit and the *activity* of his spirit within its walls" (p. 34). There is a two-way process in religious experience. It is not only man finding God: it is also God finding man.

Thurman shows that the genuine religious experience makes a real difference in the *outward life* of the individual, including among other things the creative and constructive way in which one relates to his fellows. Ultimate values are derived when the individual allows God rather than the social group to which he belongs to be the possessor of his conscience. All social as well as other values must be assessed in terms of the relation of the individual to his God.

The closing chapters discuss the need for love in the life of the individual and in society. Citing examples from medical case histories and even from experiments with mice, Thurman shows that tender loving care, "TLC," is indispensable to the wholesome development of the individual. This inner need for love adds meaning to the personality and provides the proper basis for the good society. "The profoundest disclosure in the religious experience is the awareness that the individual is not alone. . . ." (pp. 124-125)

Those who read this little book have a rich spiritual reward in store for them.

Richard I. McKinney, Department of Philosophy, Morgan State College

THE WORLD OF ALBERT SCHWEITZER

Erica Anderson and Eugene Exman. Harper & Brothers, 144 pp. $5.

Erica Anderson spent four years in French Equatorial Africa and in Alsace, making these vivid and beautiful pictures of the work of Dr. Albert Schweitzer. The pictures, together with the text by Eugene Exman, gives a magnificent introduction to one of the greatest men of our day.

This is not a book to put away on a library shelf. It should be kept prominently on the coffee table where students can pick it up and learn something of this remarkable man who has carried four parallel careers throughout his life: theologian, philosopher, musician and physician. He had a

continued on next page

"If you Americans continue on the road you are now following, many of my people will turn to Communism."

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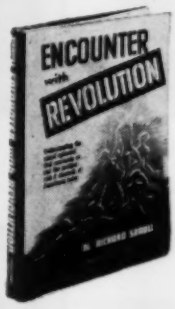
His is an ominous warning, but one we as Christians must heed. If we don't, America and Christianity will lose the struggle for men's minds.



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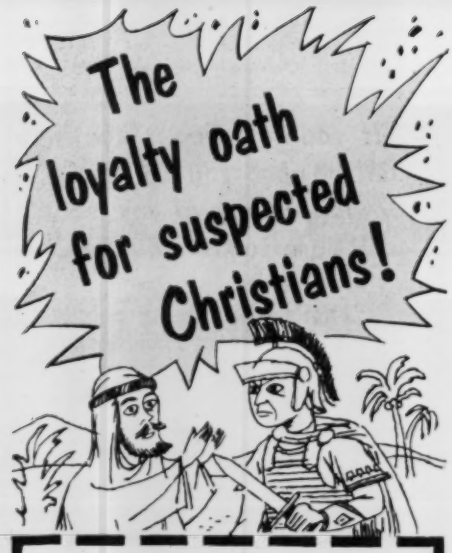

The use of the loyalty oath dates back to the 2nd century A. D. when it was used by the Romans to test suspected Christians. A brilliant new study now explains and analyzes this conflict between the Roman government and Christianity and the reasons underlying it.

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happy childhood and youth and felt deep sympathy for those in pain. At the age of twenty-one he decided that he would devote himself until his thirtieth birthday to his first loves, theology and music. After that he would give himself to the direct service of humanity. From his thirtieth to his thirty-seventh year he studied medicine, supporting himself by teaching theology at Strasbourg and giving organ concerts throughout Europe. He then went as a missionary doctor to Africa and established the now world-famous hospital at Lambarene. For forty years he has divided his time between Africa and Europe: healing the sick and continuing his writing in Africa, lecturing and giving concerts in Europe to support his work at the hospital.

When curiosity has been aroused by this book of photographs one should turn to Dr. Schweitzer's own account of his life, *Out of My Life and Thought*, obtainable in a Mentor edition at 35 cents.

Together these books will help students understand the relation between one's vocation and his Christian faith and will lead many to ask: What shall I plan to do with my life?

—Fern Babcock

PLAIN CHRISTIANITY

And other broadcast talks. By J. B. Phillips. The Macmillan Company, 1954. 61 pp., $1.65.

J. B. Phillips is well-known in this country for his unique and illuminating translations of Paul's writings *(Letters to Younger Churches)* and of the Gospels *(The Gospels Translated into Modern English)*. In this short work we come to know him as a radio preacher, speaking plainly to common people.

These brief discussions of important themes of the Christian faith will be helpful to many. One suspects they may not be immediately helpful to the student who needs a more sophisticated discussion as to why he should believe the gospel, for these talks are cast in the lingo of the non-academic work-a-day world rather than in the language of the campus.

The two strongest talks in this collection deal with Biblical themes. In one the author speaks eloquently of the grandeur of Mark's gospel; in the other he sheds some illuminating light on a job he does superbly well—translating the Bible into modern idiom.

Edward LeRoy Long, Jr.

TOWARD A THEOLOGY OF EVANGELISM

Julian N. Hartt. Abingdon Press. 1955, 119 pp., $2.

This is no book for the "Frosh Commission." But if some students and senior leaders will spend a thoughtful three hours with it, they may experience the transformation that is its theme. Dr. Hartt, after serving as the pastor of Methodist churches and teaching in Berea College, is now Professor of Philosophical Theology at Yale Divinity School. He communicates the zeal of a Christian pastor in the framework of a philosopher.

Perceiving the task of the Christian as "the proclamation of the Kingdom of perfect love and perfect freedom,"

continued on next page

An American woman explores the meaning and history of the Russian religion...

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he analyzes the human situation with fresh insights. "Sin is the will to treat persons as less than persons," producing degradation and damnation ("a condition of irremediable alienation and isolation from community for one's own decisions"). Contemporary man is filled with despair and fear of God; "that Being which all men encounter as the absolute limitation of the world and themselves." This despair and fear can be overcome only by the good news that God has revealed himself in Jesus Christ as the Redeemer: "the absolute affirmation of all creatures." The good news is that "God the Father Almighty has acted in history for all mankind . . . by establishing a community, and he calls men freely to participate in the life of this community for the fulfillment of his promises and of man's great expectations."

God does not summon us to the creation of a perfect social order. He does summon us "to the high task of increasing every positive aspect of our common life and diminishing everything in it that is destructive and inhuman." There follows a keen analysis of the psychology of revolution and the role of the Christian in politics.

When one has closed this little book he may be thinking more deeply about the Kingdom of God as a present experience for himself and for his campus.

John Maxwell Adams, Chaplain
Macalester College

HOW TO BE A MODERN LEADER

By Lawrence K. Frank. Association Press, 1954, 62 pp., $1.

The Christian Association President, the Board Chairman, and chairmen of committees planning specific program functions will find this sixty-two page book both refreshing and constructive. Mr. Frank in a helpful fashion defines and supports in convincing terms what a "good leader" is.

While every Cabinet member will certainly benefit from this book he will find that Mr. Frank's concept of the leader, as illustrated in terms of the symphony or the football team, is not easily transferable to the leadership of many of our discussion groups. Most of our religious discussion groups are not characterized by the necessity of a unanimous vote at the end of the session as to, *e.g.*, whether or not God exists or how Jesus reappeared after Calvary. This particular kind of group and its leader is not described fully enough in the book.

Further, the non-student leader responsible for an adolescent group, while unquestionably agreeing with the necessity for a considerable amount of self-direction on the part of the group, and their achieving goals of their own choosing (Chapter Two), may wonder, as I do, at just what point it is the function of the adult leader to describe the outside limits of legitimate thought and action which are necessary both to preserve the group and to demonstrate to the members the necessity for the individual responsibility which inevitably must accompany personal and group freedom.

Mr. Frank was not writing with only SCAs in mind. He is to be commended for a real contribution to any leader's quality of performance.

Robert W. Clarke
Student Christian Union,
Cleveland, Ohio

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